

HF 65 – Comments in support of statewide standards.

My name is Tessa Marton and I am a junior at Eagan High School. I am emailing you today to express my outstanding objection against the repeal of bill HF65, which would repeal statewide health education in Minnesota schools. As we live in an age where sometimes misinformation and false news is easier to come by than the truth, I believe limiting the objective education we receive in schools is extremely harmful. This is not—and I stand by this very adamantly—a partisan issue. This is not one parties view against another's. This is an issue about either enabling students to be taught about very important issues from a truthful, objective source, or motivating misinformation to be spread throughout schools. Should this bill pass, schools would be able to manipulate their curriculum to fit their personal views on the issue, potentially providing politically-loaded lessons to students, who are very susceptible to internalizing the information they are taught in schools. This topic takes a very personal note with me. My brother Bartholomew Marton has Asperger's syndrome, and struggles with serious substance abuse issues. Because of this, he has to rely on others to help him accomplish what he needs, and is dependent upon the system doing there part in order to help him survive. Already in schools, people with issues such as developmental disorders and addictions are viewed as outcasts, and are thought to be considered freeloaders who abuse the system. My brother is a person. He is a human being. While I do not support his addictions, because they could take his life, I support him. I want him to get help. I want him to get to live his life. I do not—and I want to stress this as much as I possibly I can—stand by schools teaching lessons that could villainize him for his diseases. While this is not the only expected outcome to result due to the passage of this bill, it is a highly-probably scenario. I am not willing to take the chance. The people of Minnesota should not be willing to take the chance. K-12 curriculum should be the most meticulous and conscientious issue modulated by law. Speaking as an adolescent, we are the most impressionable group lawmakers could ever try to make legislation about. Our brains are developing. We are learning. We are coming into who we are as human beings as we prepare to make real life decisions that affect us and our environment. If this bill repealing statewide health education standards passes, the youths of Minnesota will no longer be able to access a consistent education about health issues such as—but not limited to—sex education, mental health, diet, and medical treatment. While my testament focuses on the issue of substance abuse education in our state, it is not the only prevailing matter that would be gravely hurt by the passage of this bill. I do not believe I am alone when I say my own life is seriously impacted by an abundance of these issues. Every student is impacted by several of these matters every year, and limiting their ability to access a proper education on these matters is detrimental to their ability to grow up into a knowledgeable human being, able to make their own decisions for the betterment of themselves and their environment. Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns surrounding the passage of this bill. If there is any further action that can be taken on my part in order to help my perspective be heard, please let me know, as this is a matter very close to my heart.

> Sincerely,

> Tessa Marton, Eagan High School student.